

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 DHA-02 IO-13
ACDA-07 OES-06 /098 W
-----020256Z 022319 /63

R 010800Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 655
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 3119

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN
SUBJ: PAKISTAN REACTION TO THE INDIAN ELECTION AND THE NEW
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

REF: (A) LAHORE 288 (NOTAL), (B) KARACHI 1488 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY

THE INITIAL IMPACT IN PAKISTAN OF THE INDIAN ELECTIONS AND
THEIR AFTERMATH WAS FELT ALMOST ENTIRELY IN THE CONTEXT
OF THIS COUNTRY'S DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION. THE OUTCOME
ACROSS THE BORDER GAVE AN IMMEDIATE SHOT IN THE ARM TO THE
OPPOSITION AND DOUBTLESS ENCOURAGED THE PNA IN ITS
CONFRONTATION WITH BHUTTO. FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND PPP
VIEWPOINT, THE INDIAN ELECTIONS COULD NOT HAVE COME AT A
WORSE TIME. THE GOP HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN CONCERNED BY THE
INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE
INDIAN AND PAK ELECTIONS, PARTICULARLY IN THE US. THERE IS
APPREHENSION IN THE GOP AND ELSEWHERE THAT INDO-US RELATIONS
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WILL NOW IMPROVE, VERY POSSIBLY TO PAKISTAN'S DETRIMENT.
THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW INDIAN
GOVERNMENT FOR PAK-INDIAN RELATIONS ARE ALSO CAUSING SOME
CONCERN HERE. END SUMMARY.

1. AS WE HAVE REPORTED IN EARLIER MESSAGES, THE INITIAL IMPACT
IN PAKISTAN OF THE INDIAN ELECTIONS, THE VICTORY OF THE

JANATA/CFD OPPOSITION, AND THE GRACEFUL EXIT OF MRS. GANDHI WAS FELT ALMOST ENTIRELY IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS COUNTRY'S DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION. FEELINGS RANGED FROM EMBARRASSED TO RESENTFUL TO PLEASED THAT THE DEMOCRATIC AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN INDIA HAD MADE PAKISTAN'S SORDID RIGGING SCANDAL LOOK THAT MUCH WORSE.

2. THE OUTCOME IN INDIA GAVE THE PAKISTAN OPPOSITION AN IMMEDIATE SHOT IN THE ARM AND DOUBTLESS ENCOURAGED THE PNA IN ITS CONFRONTATION WITH BHUTTO. ITS LINE, AND THIS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN WIDELY SHARED, WAS THAT IF INDIA CAN HAVE FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS, WHY CAN'T WE? WITH THE ROLE OF THE PAK ELECTION COMMISSION CAUGHT UP IN CONTROVERSY -- THE OPPOSITION IS CALLING FOR ITS OUSTER, BHUTTO IS TOUTING IT AS A VEHICLE FOR REMEDYING ALLEGED ELECTION MALPRACTICES -- MANY PAKS CITED THE PERFORMANCE OF ITS INDIAN COUNTERPART IN IMMEDIATELY ORDERING REPOLLING IN AREAS WHERE FOUL PLAY HAD TAKEN PLACE. (A WRY JOKE HERE HAS IT THAT MRS. GANDHI OFFERED TO GIVE UP KASHMIR IF BHUTTO WOULD TRADE ELECTION COMMISSIONERS.) ALTHOUGH THE IMPACT HERE OF THE INDIAN ELECTIONS AND THE TRANSFER OF POWER IN DELHI HAS INEVITABLY WANTED OVER TIME, THE TIE-IN BETWEEN THE DOMESTIC POLITICS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES WAS EVIDENCED AGAIN IN BHUTTO'S MARCH 28 INAUGURAL ADDRESS, WHEN HE NOTED THAT INDIA WAS GIVING UP ITS EXTERNAL EMERGENCY AND OFFERED TO CONSIDER LIFTING THE PAKISTAN EMERGENCY IF THE OPPOSITION WOULD RETURN TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

3. FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND PPP VIEWPOINT, THE INDIAN ELECTIONS COULD NOT HAVE COME AT A WORSE TIME. THERE IS OBVIOUS IRONY
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TO THIS, FOR BHUTTO HAD PUBLICLY CLAIMED THAT HIS DECISION IN JANUARY TO CALL ELECTIONS HAD HELPED LEAD MRS. GANDHI TO FOLLOW SUIT. AS A NATIONAL PRESS TRUST PAPER EDITOR TOLD US IN KARACHI, "THE INDIAN ELECTIONS WERE THE LAST STRAW." THE GOVERNMENT'S CONSTERNATION HAS NOT BEEN CONFINED TO THE DOMESTIC IMPACT OF THE CONTRAST. GOP OFFICIALS, SPEAKING OFF THE RECORD, HAVE JOINED WITH OTHERS IN EXPRESSING TO US THEIR CONCERN ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ELECTIONS AND THEIR AFTERMATH, PARTICULARLY IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS CONCERN IS DOUBTLESS HEIGHTENED BY AN AWARENESS THAT THE SMOOTH TRANSFER OF POWER IN INDIA HAS SERVED TO DRAMATIZE THE REPRESSIVE MEASURES OF THE GOP AT A TIME WHEN THE USG IS PAYING NEW ATTENTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS.

4. MORARJI'S STATEMENTS ABOUT NUCLEAR POLICY AND NON-ALIGNMENT, HIS CONSERVATIVE AND REPUTEDLY PRO-WESTERN, ANTI-SOVIET OUTLOOK, AND HIS GOVERNMENT'S PROMPT RESTORATION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES, HAVE DOUBTLESS FURTHER QUICKENED APPREHENSION IN THE GOP AND ELSEWHERE HERE THAT THE USG, OBVIOUSLY PLEASED

WITH THE VICTORY OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA AND THE DOWNFALL OF
MRS. GANDHI, WOULD MOVE SMARTLY TO IMPROVE INDO-US RELATIONS,
VERY POSSIBLY TO THE DETRIMENT OF PAKISTAN. FOR MANY,
PROBABLY MOST, PAKISTANIS BOTH IN GOVERNMENT AND OUTSIDE,
SUBCONTINENTAL RELATIONS WITH THE BIG POWERS IS A ZERO SUM
GAME: THUS IF INDO-US RELATIONS IMPROVE, US-PAK RELATIONS
MUST BY DEFINITION SUFFER. WE HAVE NOT TALKED WITH ANY
RANKING GOP OFFICIALS ABOUT THIS, BUT WE SUSPECT THAT THE
APPREHENSIONS EXPRESSED TO US ON THIS SCORE BY MFA INDIA
DIRECTOR ZAFAR HILALY IN A LONG DISCUSSION OF THE NEW INDIAN
M
GOVERNMENT ARE PROBABLY WIDELY SHARED. THEY APPEAR TO BE
FELT BY MANY PRIVATE PAKS WE HAVE SPOKEN WITH, SOME OF WHOM

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R 010800Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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ALSO CITE COMPLICATING FACTORS IN US-PK RELATIONS, I.E.
THE REPROCESSING PLANT ISSUE AND ARMS SALES, AS CONTRIBUTING
FURTHER TOWARD USG INCLINATION TOWARD INDIA. RECITING THE
CAUSES OF PAK CONCERN, THE PRO-OPPOSITION NAWA-I-WAQT NOTED
MARCH 29 THAT PAKISTAN MUST TAKE SERIOUS NOTE OF THE SITUATION
AND BE PREPARED TO SAFEGUARD ITS OWN INTERESTS.

5. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW INDIAN
GOVERNMENT FOR PAK-INDIAN RELATIONS ARE ALSO CAUSING SOME
CONCERN HERE. DESPITE HER ROLE IN 1971, MFA

OFFICIALS HAVE

OFTEN TOLD US IN THE PAST THAT THEY PREFERRED A GOVERNMENT
IN NEW DELHI LED BY MRS. GANDHI AND HAVE EXPRESSED THE HOPE
THAT SHE WOULD CARRY ON IN A STRONG AND STABLE POSITION.
IN REVIEWING THE NEW INDIAN CABINET, HILALY CITED THE
PROMINENCE OF COMMUNAL FIGURES AND HARDLINERS ON PAKISTAN.
HE RECALLED MORARJI'S PAST RECORD OF TOUGHNESS TOWARDS THE
PAKS, BUT FOCUSED MUCH
MORE ON FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE. HE
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ALLEGED THAT VAJPAYEE HAD AS RECENTLY AS 1975 MADE STATEMENTS
CALLING FOR "AKHAND BHARAT" (THE ABSORPTION OF PAKISTAN INTO
UNDIVIDED INDIA) AND SAID THAT IN LIGHT OF THE VAJPAYEE
APPOINTMENT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE GOI TO ISSUE OR PASS TO
THE GOP A REASSURING STATEMENT ON INDO-PAK RELATIONS AND TO
REAFFIRM ITS COMMITMENT TO THE SIMLA AGREEMENT. ALTHOUGH WE
REGARD HILALY AS A HOthead ON INDIA, HERE TOO WE SUSPECT
HIS VIEWS, AT LEAST ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE DESAI GOVERNMENT,
MAY BE SHARED FURTHER UP THE MFA LINE. (BUT FOREIGN MINISTER
AZIZ AHMED, ASKED BY THE AMBASSADOR MARCH 31 ABOUT THE NEW
CABINET, MERELY SAID HE KNEW MANY OF THE MINISTERS AND DID
NOT EXPRESS ANY CONCERN ABOUT THEM).

6. MAKING A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC REACTION IN THE
PUNJAB TO THE NEW INDIAN GOVERNMENT, CONGEN LAHORE NOTES THAT
OBSERVERS THERE APPEAR TO BE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT FURTHER INDO-PAK
NORMALIZATION AND FEAR THAT THE SIMLA PROCESS MAY SUFFER A
SETBACK. VAJPAYEE IS REGARDED AS THE VILLAIN OF THE PIECE.
MORARJI IS RESPECTED, BUT HE IS A GANDHIAN, A QUINTESSENTIAL
HINDU, AND SOME FEAR THAT THE SECULAR CONCEPT IN INDIA MAY
WEAKEN UNDER HIS RULE. THE PRO-HINDU JANA SANGH ELEMENT
IS ALSO CONSIDERED WORRISOME IN THIS REGARD. IF THE POSITION
OF THE MUSLIM MINORITY SHOULD DETERIORATE, INDO-PAK RELATIONS
WOULD BE FURTHER STRAINED. OTHERS, HOWEVER, BELIEVE THAT
MORARJI'S EMPHASIS ON MORALITY WILL ATTRACT MUSLIM SUPPORT.
IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT JANATA GOT THE MUSLIM VOTE,
PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF STERILIZATION ISSUE, AND THAT THIS COULD
PERHAPS HAVE A MITIGATING INFLUENCE ON ANY MILITANT HINDU
TENDENCIES WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT.

7. CONGEN KARACHI TELLS US THAT SCATTERED OBSERVERS
COMMENTING ON INDO-PAK RELATIONS THERE HAVE NOTED THAT
VAJPAYEE IS TRADITIONALLY A HARDLINER ON THE KASHMIR ISSUE,
AND THAT THE CABINET AS A WHOLE IS MORE CONSERVATIVE AND
REVANCHIST. OTHERS COMMENT THAT THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN
INDIA PROBABLY WILL RETURN TO PRE-INDIRA CONDITIONS: POLITICAL
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SQUABBLING, INCREASED CORRUPTION, FADING POPULATION CONTROL
PROGRAM, ETC. THESE COMMENTATORS SEEM TO FEEL THAT THESE
TRENDS IN THEMSELVES SUGGEST NO PARTICULAR DIRECTION IN
INDO-PAK RELATIONS.
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